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ABSTRACT

Historically, the status of girls has evoked much less interest than that of women. Recently emerging scholastic and strategic study concerning the vulnerability of girls, and the impact the neglect has on the status of women, is adding a vital missing link to the discourse on women and development. This book examines the status of girls and demonstrates that acculturation and development processes favor boys over girls. It moves from the premise that due to their age and gender, girls experience the consequences of gender discrimination even more than women, and the burden is borne by girls universally, irrespective of societal or personal socioeconomic levels. Recognizing that girlhood precedes, presages, and defines womanhood, the book seeks to explain to development strategists and scholars, as well as to feminists, that the key to women's development lies in the extent to which girls are protected, nurtured, and empowered. The book draws on comparative cross-cultural data to establish the greater vulnerability of girls in various sectors of human development including health and survival, nutrition, education, employment, and acculturation. The book concludes with specific suggestions for development planners and government officials about successfully incorporating girls into development strategies as a way of ensuring a more gender-equitable child and adult world. Contains approximately 195 references. (SD)

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